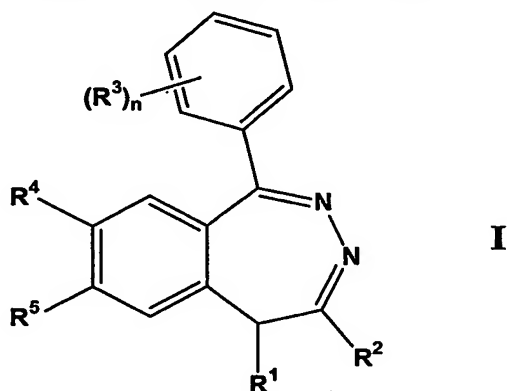


## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of treating an individual afflicted with an inflammatory disorder of epithelial tissue comprising administering to said individual an effective amount of at least one compound according to Formula I:



wherein:

- $R^1$  is  $-(C_1-C_7)$ hydrocarbonyl or  $-(C_2-C_6)$ heteroalkyl;  
 $R^2$  is selected from the group consisting of  $-H$ , and  $-(C_1-C_7)$ hydrocarbonyl;  
 wherein  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  may combine to form a carbocyclic or heterocyclic 5- or 6-membered ring;  
 $R^3$  is independently selected from the group consisting of  $-O(C_1-C_6)$ alkyl,  $-OH$ ,  $-O$ -acyl,  $-SH$ ,  $-S(C_1-C_3)$ alkyl,  $-NH_2$ ,  $-NH(C_1-C_6)$ alkyl,  $-N((C_1-C_6)alkyl)_2$ ,  $-NH$ -acyl,  $-NO_2$  and halogen;  
 $n$  is 1, 2 or 3;  
 $R^4$  and  $R^5$  are independently selected from the group consisting of  $-O(C_1-C_6)$ alkyl,  $-OH$ ,  $O$ -acyl,  $-SH$ ,  $-S(C_1-C_3)$ alkyl,  $-NH_2$ ,  $NH$ -acyl and halogen;  
 wherein,  $R^4$  and  $R^5$  may combine to form a 5-, 6- or 7-membered heterocyclic ring;  
 or a pharmaceutically-acceptable salt of such a compound, wherein said compound is administered at a dose of less than about 50 mg/day.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said compound is administered at a dose of less than about 25 mg/day.
- 5 3. The method according to claim 1, wherein said compound is administered at a dose of less than about 10 mg/day.
4. The method according to claim 1, wherein said compound is administered at a dose of less than about 1 mg/day.
- 10 5. The method according to claim 1, wherein said compound is administered at a dose of less than about 10 mg/ml.
6. The method according to claim 1, wherein said compound is administered at a dose of less than about 1mg/ml.
- 15 7. The method according to claim 1, wherein said inflammatory disorder of epithelial tissue is a skin disorder.
8. The method according to claim 1, wherein said inflammatory disorder of epithelial tissue is a gastrointestinal disorder.
9. The method according to claim 1, wherein the compound is administered intracolonicallly or topically.
- 25 10. The method according to claim 1 wherein the compound according to formula I comprises a racemic mixture of (*R*)- and (*S*)- enantiomers with respect to the absolute conformation at the 5-position of the benzodiazepine ring.
- 30 11. The method according to claim 10, wherein:  
R<sup>1</sup> is -(C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl;

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$R^2$  is selected from the group consisting of  $-H$  and  $-(C_1-C_6)alkyl$ ;

$R^3$  is independently selected from the group consisting of  $-O(C_1-C_6)alkyl$ ,  $-O-acyl$  and  $-OH$ ;

$n$  is 1, 2 or 3;

5         $R^4$  and  $R^5$  are independently selected from the group consisting of  $-O(C_1-C_6)alkyl$ ,  $-O-acyl$  and  $-OH$ , wherein,  $R^4$  and  $R^5$  may combine to form a 5-, 6- or 7-membered heterocyclic ring;

or a pharmaceutically-acceptable salt of such a compound.

10    12.    The method according to claim 11, wherein:

$R^1$  is  $-CH_2CH_3$ ;

$R^2$  is  $-CH_3$

$R^3$ ,  $R^4$  and  $R^5$  are independently selected from the group consisting of  $-OH$  and  $-O(C_1-C_6)alkyl$ ;

15         $n$  is 1, 2 or 3;

or a pharmaceutically-acceptable salt of such a compound.

13.    The method according to claim 12, wherein:

$R^1$  is  $-CH_2CH_3$ ;

20         $R^2$  is  $-CH_3$

$R^3$ ,  $R^4$  and  $R^5$  are independently selected from the group consisting of  $-OH$  and  $-OCH_3$ ;

$n$  is of 1, 2 or 3;

or a pharmaceutically-acceptable salt of such a compound.

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14.    The method according to claim 13, wherein the compound is selected from the group consisting of:

1-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7,8-dimethoxy-5H-2,3-benzodiazepine;

30        1-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7-hydroxy-8-methoxy-5H-2,3-benzodiazepine;

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1-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7,8-dimethoxy-5H-  
2,3-benzodiazepine;

1-(3-methoxy-4-hydroxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7,8-dimethoxy-5H-  
2,3-benzodiazepine;

5 1-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7-methoxy-8-hydroxy-5H-  
2,3-benzodiazepine;

1-(3-methoxy-4-hydroxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7-hydroxy-8-  
methoxy-5H-2,3-benzodiazepine;

10 1-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7-hydroxy-8-  
methoxy-5H-2,3-benzodiazepine;

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

15 15. The method according to claim 14, wherein the compound is 1-(3,4-  
dimethoxy-phenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7,8-dimethoxy-5H-2,3-benzodiazepine; or  
a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

16. The method according to claim 1, wherein said wherein said compounds  
according to formula I are (*R*)-enantiomers substantially free of the  
corresponding (*S*)-enantiomers, with respect to the absolute conformation at the  
20 5-position of the benzodiazepine ring.

17. The method according to claim 16, wherein:  
R<sup>1</sup> is -(C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl;  
R<sup>2</sup> is selected from the group consisting of -H and -(C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl;  
25 R<sup>3</sup> is independently selected from the group consisting of -O(C<sub>1</sub>-  
C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl, -O-acyl and -OH;  
n is 1, 2 or 3;  
R<sup>4</sup> and R<sup>5</sup> are independently selected from the group consisting of  
-O(C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl, -O-acyl and -OH, wherein, R<sup>4</sup> and R<sup>5</sup> may combine to form a  
30 5-, 6- or 7-membered heterocyclic ring;  
or a pharmaceutically-acceptable salt of such a compound.

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18. The method according to claim 17, wherein:  
R<sup>1</sup> is -CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>;  
R<sup>2</sup> is -CH<sub>3</sub>  
5 R<sup>3</sup>, R<sup>4</sup> and R<sup>5</sup> are independently selected from the group consisting of  
-OH and -O(C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>)alkyl;  
n is 1, 2 or 3;  
or a pharmaceutically-acceptable salt of such a compound.
- 10 19. The method according to claim 18, wherein:  
R<sup>1</sup> is -CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>;  
R<sup>2</sup> is -CH<sub>3</sub>  
R<sup>3</sup>, R<sup>4</sup> and R<sup>5</sup> are independently selected from the group consisting of  
-OH and -OCH<sub>3</sub>;  
15 n is of 1, 2 or 3;  
or a pharmaceutically-acceptable salt of such a compound.
20. The method according to claim 19, wherein the compound is selected  
from the group consisting of:  
20 (R)-1-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7,8-dimethoxy-5H-2,3-  
benzodiazepine;  
(R)-1-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7-hydroxy-8-methoxy-  
5H-2,3-benzodiazepine;  
(R)-1-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7,8-dimethoxy-  
25 5H-2,3-benzodiazepine;  
(R)-1-(3-methoxy-4-hydroxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7,8-dimethoxy-  
5H-2,3-benzodiazepine;  
(R)-1-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7-methoxy-8-hydroxy-  
5H-2,3-benzodiazepine;  
30 (R)-1-(3-methoxy-4-hydroxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7-hydroxy-8-  
methoxy-5H-2,3-benzodiazepine;

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(*R*)-1-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7-hydroxy-8-methoxy-5H-2,3-benzodiazepine;  
substantially free of the corresponding (*S*)-enantiomers;  
and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

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21. The method according to claim 20, wherein the compound is (*R*)-1-(3,4-dimethoxy-phenyl)-4-methyl-5-ethyl-7,8-dimethoxy-5H-2,3-benzodiazepine substantially free of the corresponding (*S*)-enantiomer;  
or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

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